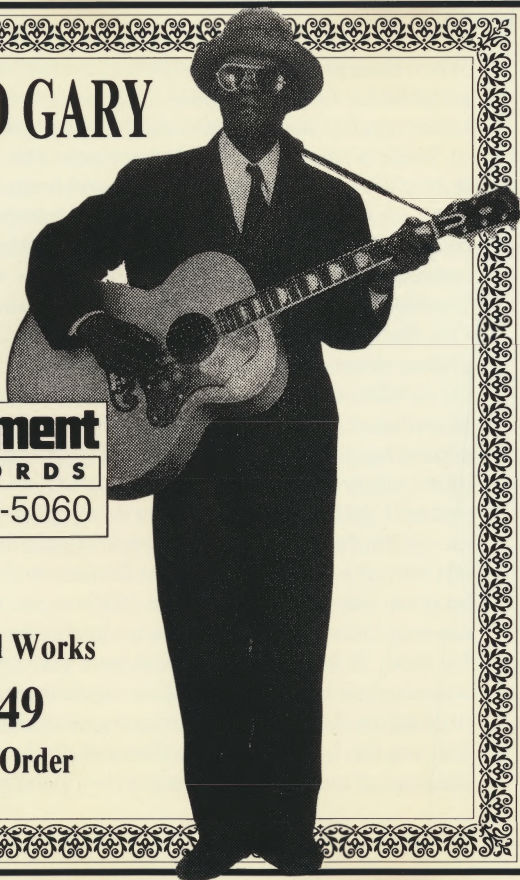


REV. BLIND GARY DAVIS

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RECORDS
DOCD-5060

Complete Recorded Works
1935—1949
In Chronological Order



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REV. BLIND GARY DAVIS (1935-1949)

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Compiled and produced
by Johnny Parth
Eipeldauerstr. 23/43/5
A-1220 Vienna, Austria
Remastering:
Studio Klement
Booklet Notes:
Chris Smith

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REV. BLIND GARY DAVIS

Complete Recorded Works 1935-1949

In Chronological Order

1. I'm Throwin' Up My Hands
2. Cross And Evil Woman Blues
3. I Am The True Vine
4. I Am The Light Of The World
5. O Lord, Search My Heart
6. I Saw The Light (Bull City Red, vcl)
7. You Can Go Home
8. Twelve Gates To The City
9. Have More Faith In Jesus
10. You Got To Go Down
11. I Belong To The Band - Hallelujah!
12. The Great Change In Me
13. Lord, I Wish I Could See
14. Lord, Stand By Me
15. The Angel's Message To Me
16. Civil War March
17. I Cannot Bear My Burden By Myself
18. I'm Gonna Meet You At The Station

REV. BLIND GARY DAVIS (1935-1949)

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When Gary Davis made his first records in New York in 1935, he'd been a guitarist for many years; born in Laurens, SC in 1896, by 1904 he owned his own guitar and was playing for dances. By 1911, he was a member of Willie Walker's string band in Greenville. At some point, probably during his first marriage, which lasted from 1919 to 1924, Davis moved to North Carolina, and when he came to record, he was an associate of Blind Boy Fuller, who was also to make his debut on disc on this occasion.

Davis was a guitar genius; that much is obvious from the first notes of this CD. He'd taught Fuller a good deal, but Fuller, though an excellent player, never approached Davis's total command of the instrument. Davis's ideas were far beyond both the notions and the execution of most blues-based guitarists of his day, and although he had no formal musical education, his musical **imagination** is comparable — and not as an unnecessary attempt to give respectability to an untutored musician — to that of J. S. Bach, for both men developed a complex, contrapuntal music that fused melody, rhythm and harmony into an inseparable unity. It's also important to note that Davis was deeply devout. He was not to be ordained until 1937, and in 1935 he was still prepared, albeit uneasily, to sing blues; but he undoubtedly saw himself as a guitarist for God. In later years, he became a god for guitarists, many of whom were made uneasy by his intense fundamentalism, and tried to persuade themselves that Davis performed a nonexistent "holy blues". When he did sing the blues, he was a fine and distinctive executant, bringing to the form a much more introspective, personal vocal delivery than the

one he used for his religious music. In that area, his singing and preaching are those of a street evangelist, determined both to make himself heard over competing noise, and to attract potential converts by the sheer fervour of his performance. His ferocity seems to have been daunting even to black record buyers of the day, for his 1935 discs do not appear to have sold widely.

Davis felt he was cheated by J. B. Long, who had arranged the session, and would not record again when Long asked him to in 1939; by that time he had become Reverend Davis, and was no longer prepared to play blues, despite being aware that pandering to popular taste would relieve his poverty somewhat. In December 1943, he remarried, and was a New York resident from January 1944 to his death in 1972. At some time not long after his arrival in New York, Davis cut the instrumental showpiece "Civil War March", which was unissued for many years. The command to "Shoot that Jap!" probably dates it to around 1945, and makes the piece's title rather confusing. Later recordings of it were usually called "Soldier's Drill", but it's likely enough that it dates back, if not to the Civil War, then to the turn of the century when Davis was learning to play. In 1949, Davis made his last issued recordings for a black audience, using a wooden bodied guitar which had a softer sound than the steel National he'd used in 1935. His later recordings, directed towards the folk revival audience, were sometimes even more technically breathtaking than these early sides, but they seldom displayed a comparable blend of religious fervour and musical genius.

Chris Smith

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1. I'm Throwin' Up My Hands (Ain't Gonna Work Here No More)	17859-2-ARC 35-10-16	(A)	2:47
2. Cross And Evil Woman Blues	17860-1-ARC 35-10-16	(A)	3:01
3. I Am The True Vine	17875-2-ARC 5-12-66	(B)	3:13
4. I Am The Light Of The World	17876-2-ARC 5-12-66	(B)	3:08
5. O Lord, Search My Heart	17877-2-ARC 35-10-33	(B)	3:02
6. I Saw The Light	17878-2-ARC 6-05-65	(C)	3:03
7. You Can Go Home	17889-2-ARC 7-04-55	(D)	3:05
8. Twelve Gates To The City	17890-2-ARC 7-04-55	(D)	3:06
9. Have More Faith In Jesus	17891-1-ARC 6-11-63	(D)	3:00
10. You Got To Go Down	17892-2-ARC 35-10-33	(D)	3:15
11. I Belong To The Band — Hallelujah!	17893-2-ARC 6-02-65	(D)	3:11
12. The Great Change In Me	17894-1-ARC 6-02-65	(D)	3:15
13. Lord, I Wish I Could See	17895-2-ARC unissued	(D)	3:02
14. Lord, Stand By Me	17896-1-ARC 6-05-65	(D)	3:05
15. The Angel's Message To Me	17897-2-ARC 6-11-63	(D)	3:05
16. Civil War March	Asch AA-4	(E)	5:27
17. I Cannot Bear My Burden By Myself	Lenox L-520	(F)	2:49
18. I'm Gonna Meet You At The Station	Lenox L-520	(F)	2:38

PERSONNEL:

- A: Blind Gary Davis, vcl/gtr. _____ New York City, 23 July 1935
 B: Blind Gary Davis, vcl/gtr. _____ New York City, 25 July 1935
 C: Bull City Red (George Washington), vcl;
 acc. Blind Gary Davis, gtr. _____ New York City, 25 July 1935
 D: Blind Gary Davis, vcl/gtr. _____ New York City, 26 July 1935
 E: Blind Gary Davis, gtr solo/speech/shouts _____ New York City, c. 1945
 F: Rev. Blind Gary Davis, vcl/gtr. _____ New York City, 1949

REV.
BLIND GARY DAVIS
Complete Recorded Works 1935—1949 In Chronological Order

COMPACT
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MECHANA

A A D



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